CLAIMS

1.   A process for relating a service provider resource with a fixed identifier that allows resource requestors to consistently access a service provider resource without being affected by changes to the service provider resource, comprising the steps of:

providing request reception means on a central server for receiving a resource information request from a resource requestor for a particular resource;

extracting a service provider identifier from said resource information request;

wherein said identifier is a predetermined identifier;

providing a resource information database resident on said central server that contains cross references from service provider identifiers to service provider resource information;

wherein said database contains resource information for all of the service providers within the central server's area of responsibility;

wherein the database resource information includes, but is not limited to, resource description and resource universal resource locator (URL) address; and

wherein said central server references said database using said extracted service provider identifier and retrieves an associated service provider resource's information from said database.

2.   The process of Claim 1, wherein said central server's area of responsibility is locality, assignment, or trust based.

3.   The process of Claim 1, wherein said service provider identifier is a universal resource identifier (URI).

4.   The process of Claim 1, wherein said central server returns the retrieved service provider resource information to said resource requestor.

5.   The process of Claim 4, wherein said central server verifies said resource information request before returning the retrieved service provider resource information.

6.   The process of Claim 1, wherein said resource requestor uses the URL from the retrieved service provider resource information to access the resource from the service provider.

7.   The process of Claim 1, wherein said resource requestor uses the retrieved service provider resource information to display the resource description to a user.

8.   A process for relating a service provider resource with a fixed identifier that allows
5   resource requestors to consistently access a service provider resource without being affected by changes to the service provider resource, comprising the steps of:
        providing request reception means on a service provider site for receiving a resource information request from a resource requestor for a particular resource;
        extracting a service provider identifier from said resource information request;
10   wherein said identifier is a predetermined identifier;
        providing a resource information database resident on said service provider site that contains cross references from service provider identifiers to information for associated resources of said service provider;
        wherein the database resource information includes, but is not limited to, resource
15   description and resource universal resource locator (URL) address; and
        wherein said service provider site references said database using said extracted service provider identifier and retrieves an associated resource's information from said database.

20   9.   The process of Claim 8, wherein said service provider identifier is a universal resource identifier (URI).

10.   The process of Claim 8, wherein said service provider site returns the retrieved resource information to said resource requestor.
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11.   The process of Claim 10, wherein said service provider site verifies said resource information request before returning the retrieved resource information.

12.   The process of Claim 8, wherein said resource requestor uses the URL from the
30   retrieved resource information to access the resource from the service provider.

13.   The process of Claim 8, wherein said resource requestor uses the retrieved resource information to display the resource description to a user.

35   14.   An apparatus for relating a service provider resource with a fixed identifier that allows resource requestors to consistently access a service provider resource without being affected by changes to the service provider resource, comprising:
        request reception means on a central server for receiving a resource information request from a resource requestor for a particular resource;

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a module for extracting a service provider identifier from said resource information request;

wherein said identifier is a predetermined identifier;

a resource information database resident on said central server that contains cross references from service provider identifiers to service provider resource information;

wherein said database contains resource information for all of the service providers within the central server's area of responsibility;

wherein the database resource information includes, but is not limited to, resource description and resource universal resource locator (URL) address; and

wherein said central server references said database using said extracted service provider identifier and retrieves an associated service provider resource's information from said database.

15. The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said central server's area of responsibility is locality, assignment, or trust based.

16. The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said service provider identifier is a universal resource identifier (URI).

16. The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said central server returns the retrieved service provider resource information to said resource requestor.

17. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein said central server verifies said resource information request before returning the retrieved service provider resource information.

18. The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said resource requestor uses the URL from the retrieved service provider resource information to access the resource from the service provider.

19. The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said resource requestor uses the retrieved service provider resource information to display the resource description to a user.

20. An apparatus for relating a service provider resource with a fixed identifier that allows resource requestors to consistently access a service provider resource without being affected by changes to the service provider resource, comprising:

request reception means on a service provider site for receiving a resource information request from a resource requestor for a particular resource;

a module for extracting a service provider identifier from said resource information request;

wherein said identifier is a predetermined identifier;

a resource information database resident on said service provider site that contains cross references from service provider identifiers to information for associated resources of said service provider;

5   wherein the database resource information includes, but is not limited to, resource description and resource universal resource locator (URL) address; and

wherein said service provider site references said database using said extracted service provider identifier and retrieves an associated resource's information from said database.

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21.   The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said service provider identifier is a universal resource identifier (URI).

22.   The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said service provider site returns the

15   retrieved resource information to said resource requestor.

23.   The apparatus of Claim 23, wherein said service provider site verifies said resource information request before returning the retrieved resource information.

20   24.   The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said resource requestor uses the URL from the retrieved resource information to access the resource from the service provider.

25.   The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said resource requestor uses the retrieved resource information to display the resource description to a user.